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By Herald Staff
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U.S. Representative Sanford Bishop, D-Albany, receives a special accolade

WASHINGTON — The Council for Agriculture Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET) recently awarded U.S. Rep. Sanford D. Bishop Jr., D-Albany, the Congressional Champions Award for his years of service on behalf of America's land-grant universities.

"I was honored to receive this award because I believe our land-grant colleges are essential to our national prosperity," Bishop said. "Their research, extension and training programs are why we can grow the best food and fiber on the planet, and I have seen the investments pay off in Georgia's agriculture sector."

At the 2011 Awards reception, CARET also recognized U.S. Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, for her work on behalf of land-grant universities.

The national grassroots organization is affiliated with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and is comprised of volunteer representatives from the 50 states, the U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.

CARET's mission is to advocate for greater national support and understanding of the land-grant university system's food and agricultural research, extension and teaching programs that enhance the quality of life for all people.

However, as the government focuses on balancing the budget, funding for the programs CARET supports has come under increased scrutiny.

"I believe our country must get its fiscal house in order, but reducing or cancelling funding for these essential programs would be detrimental to our agriculture sector, and our country," Bishop said.

"CARET has been a tremendous partner in advocating for critical research and development resources, and helped educate many of my colleagues, and the nation, about the important role land-grant universities play. I look forward to standing side-by-side with them in the coming days."